

Old D.C. Central Public Library
499 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington
District of Columbia

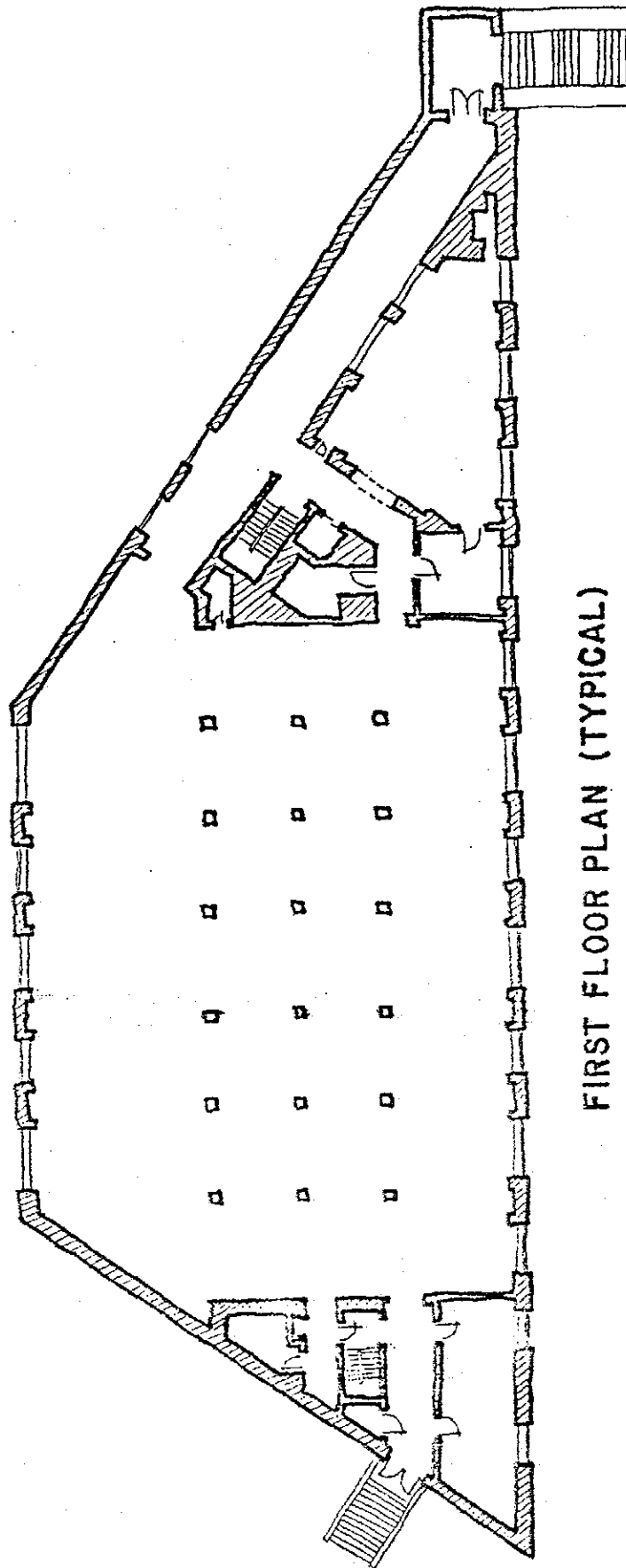
HABS No. DC-372

HABS,
DC,
WASH,
241-

PHOTOGRAPHS
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

STATE District of Columbia	COUNTY	TOWN OR VICINITY Washington, D.C.
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Old D.C. Central Public Library		HABS NO. DC-372
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) 499 Pennsylvania Ave. Lot 827 Square 491		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1941 (Permit #243325, 5/7/41	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Nathan Wyeth, Municipal Architect of D.C.	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Reinforced concrete structure relating to the Ford Motor Company building and other neighboring buildings anchoring the streetscape of Pennsylvania Avenue.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Reinforced, poured in place concrete.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Trapezoidal measuring 270' in Avenue frontage, is 115' deep and 75' along the rear property line.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Five stories plus basement, fourteen bays wide, flat roof, with limestone clad facade. The main entrance is located on the east end. The central twelve bays contain two story windows at the third and fourth floors. The fifth floor, set back one bay, has windows with ornamental stone grilles.		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) All floor plans of the library are similar. The center of the library volume contains an open space three bays by six bays of structural piers with offices flanking. Staircases and elevators are centered in the east-west portion of the library. (See floor plans).		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES None		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Vacant to be demolished.		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE This structure was recorded by Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDE LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Building permit #243325 5/7/41 National Archives. On site field inspection.		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Wendy Hunter, Architect with Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation, Patricia Rowse, Historian with HABS.		DATE June 1980



FIRST FLOOR PLAN (TYPICAL)

OLD D.C. PUBLIC LIBRARY
499 PENNSYLVANIA AVE.

ADDENDUM TO:

D.C. Central Public Library, Old
499 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-372

HABS
DC,
WASH,
241-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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WASH,
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ADDENDUM TO
OLD DC CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY
HABS No. DC-372
(Page 3)

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

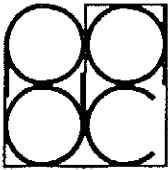
OLD DC CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

This report is an addendum to a 2 page report previously transmitted to the Library of Congress.

Location: 499 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.

Date of Construction: 1941.

Present Owner: unknown.



PENNSYLVANIA
AVENUE
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION
425 13TH STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

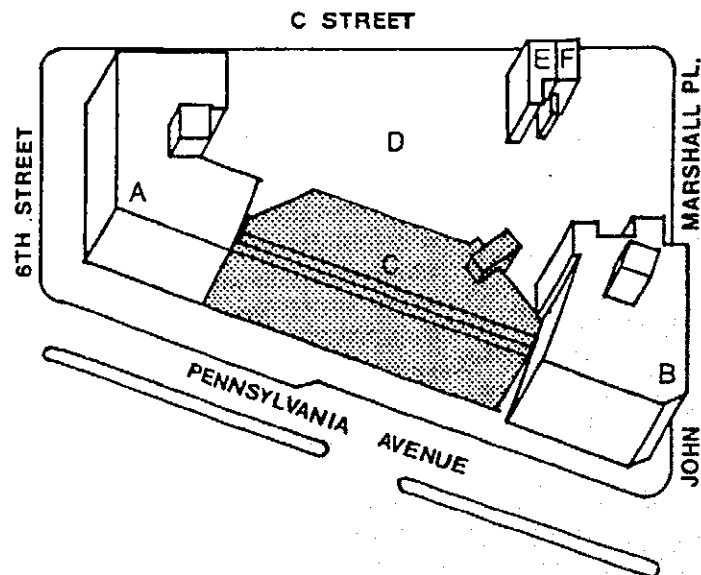
GENERAL CONSULTANTS

ANDERSON NOTTER/MARIANI
GENERAL PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
DEVROUX & FURNELL
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS
DAVID McLAREN HART & ASSOCIATES
PRESERVATION & CONSERVATION CONSULTANT
MONK DUNSTONE ASSOCIATES
COST ESTIMATING CONSULTANT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

BUILDING DOCUMENTATION

OLD DC CENTRAL PUBLIC LIBRARY
499 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
PART OF LOT 827



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This Pennsylvania Avenue building spanning the middle third of the block has a trapezoidal plan with its base lying along the avenue. The site measures 270' in avenue frontage, is 115' deep, and 75' along its rear property line. The building, which follows the shape of the lot, is five-stories high (plus basement), flat-roofed, and has a limestone-clad facade. The structure is reinforced poured-in-place concrete. Its entire volume is set back from the sidewalk and uses a raised terrace with planting as a transitional element and also to conceal a basement window-well. Adjacent buildings to the rear (north) have been demolished and their sites converted to one large open parking lot.

The structure is of reinforced concrete. Columns and beams support a basic structural bay whose typical dimensions are 14'6" east-west and approximately 30' north-south. Bays are arranged three-deep, 30' wide and run east-west. The floor structures consist of regularly-ribbed slabs whenever bays are rectangular in plan. At the irregular perimeter bays, ceiling ribbing creates a variably-sized coffering effect.

At the front as well as the rear the massing decreases at the upper floors. At the front (south) the fifth story is set back one full bay, while at the rear a similar setback occurs at the third floor level.

The main entrance to the building is located on the east end in a small one story attached pavilion.

Fenestration on both facades is simply arranged in vertical groupings of one per structural bay which establishes the repetitive horizontal rhythm that characterizes this building.

Stylistically the building is a formalistic modern design that uses classically derived exterior organization. Decorative detailing is scarce; while classical in spirit it tends toward Art-Moderne in form but without sufficient strength to characterize the building as such.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The building was designed in 1941 by the Municipal Architect of the District of Columbia, who at the time was Nathan Wyeth. (Permit No. 243325, 5/7/41.) The Central Library's architecture is representative of mid-Twentieth Century institutional buildings, which con-

jugated the scale and solemnity of Neo-Classical structures with the then-current design formulae favoring abstraction of detailing and straightforward massing. The building's offset entrance through a small appended pavillion contradicts the strong symmetrical arrangement of the facade. More common to this architectural type, and in keeping with the scale of the building, is a grand axial approach to the entrance.

Nevertheless, the DC Library contributes a strong definition to the Pennsylvania Avenue axis. Its relatively large facade and the cadence of its fenestration relate to the classical rhythm of the more richly-detailed Federal Triangle buildings located on the south side of the Avenue.

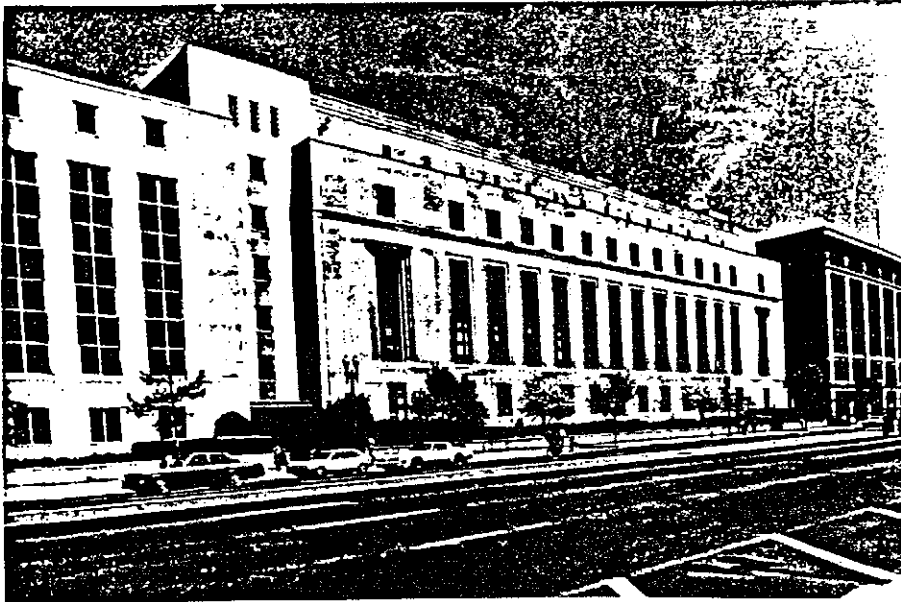
SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Facade: The front elevation is 4 stories high by fourteen bays wide. A fifth level is set back one full bay creating a roof deck. The structural bays set the repetitive facade rhythm. Each end bay is wider, suggesting terminal pavilions. Emphasizing this trait, each respective two-story-high window composition is recessed deep into the opening with jambs stepping inward in two reveals. Above the opening there is a projecting slightly convex rectangular hood.

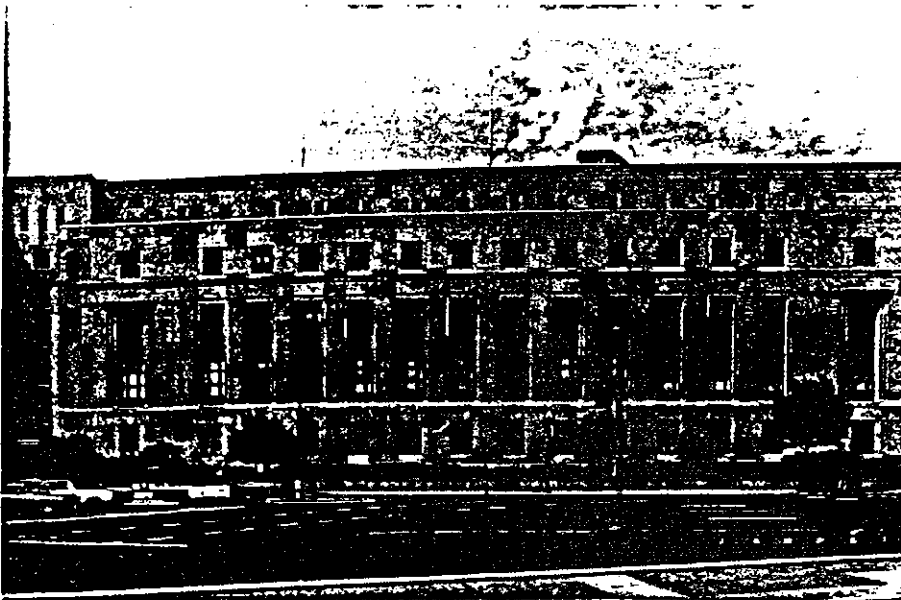
The intermediate twelve bays also feature two story high window openings at the 2nd and 3rd levels. Each evenly-spaced opening is simply punched into the wall, thus creating a flat allusion to a classical colonnade.

The windows at the fifth floor level feature ornamental stone grilles.

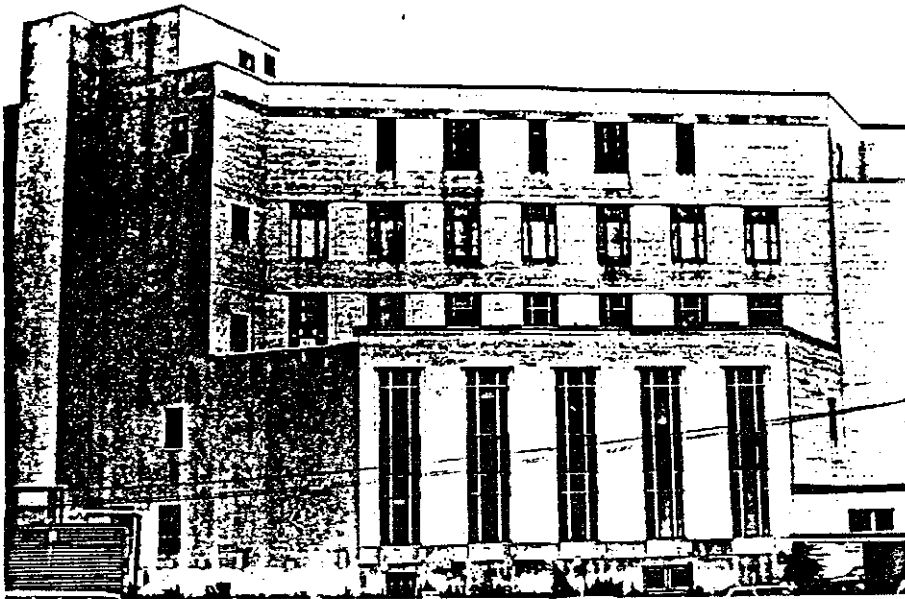
August 1979



OBLIQUE VIEW OF PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
FACADE SHOWING ADJACENT BUILDINGS



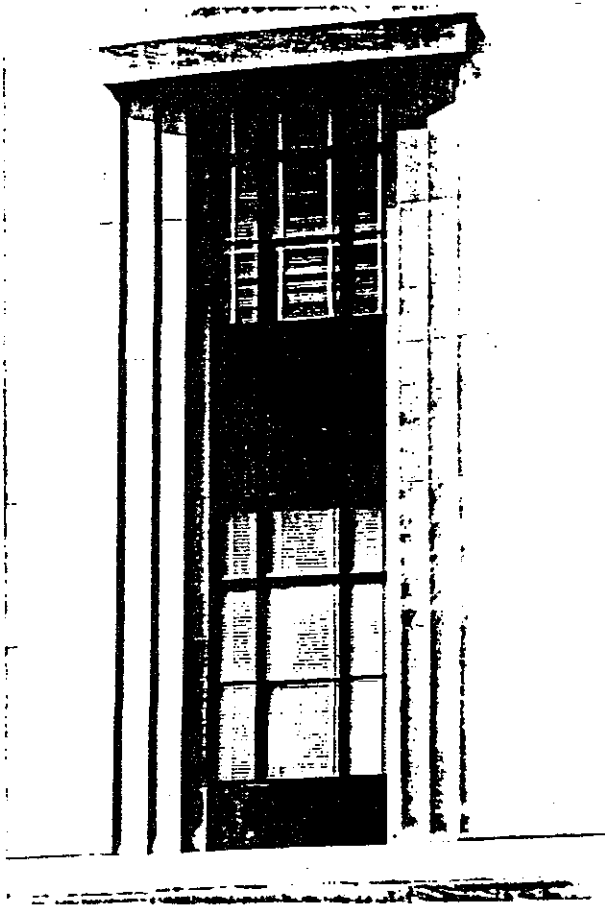
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE FACADE



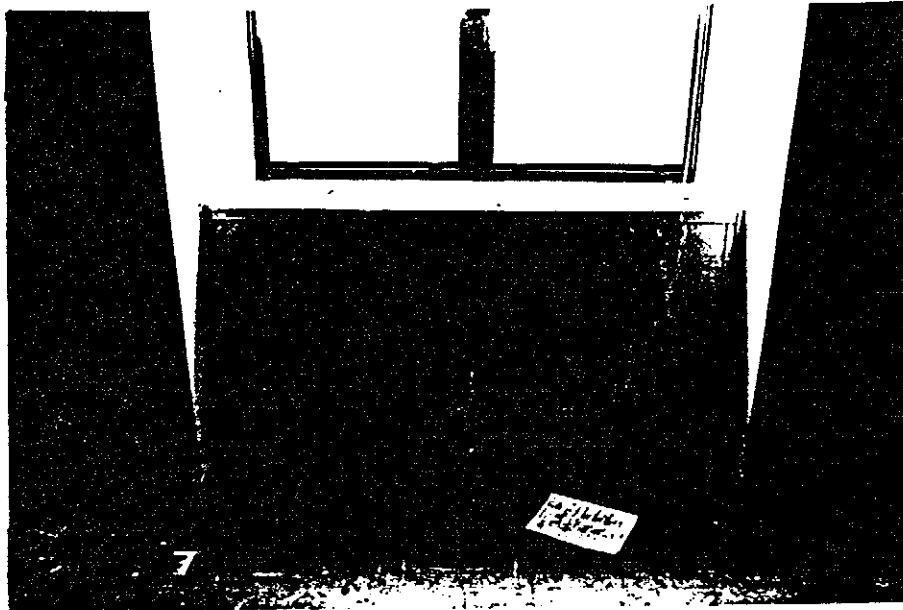
REAR ELEVATION (NORTH)



REAR ELEVATION, SHOWING
OBLIQUE WALL AT NORTHEAST



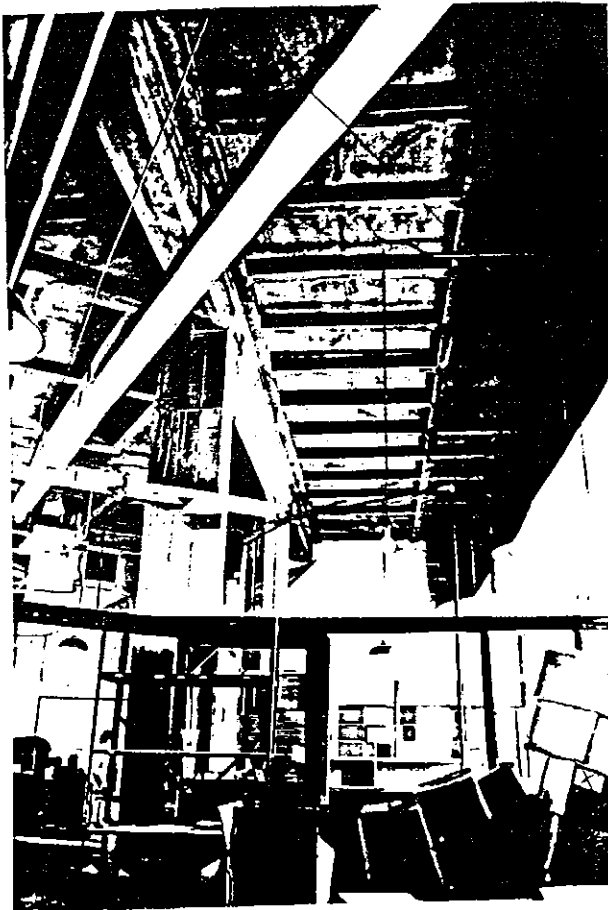
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE FACADE;
SECOND AND THIRD FLOOR DETAIL
OF WINDOW



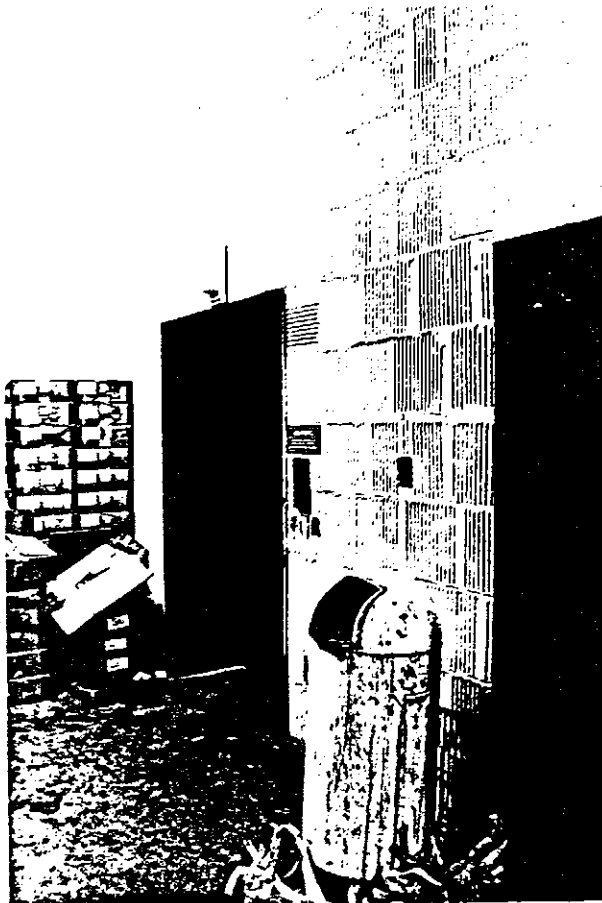
TYPICAL OFFICE FLOOR WINDOW VENTILATION UNIT



VIEW OF TYPICAL OFFICE FLOOR



FIFTH FLOOR:VIEW OF EXPOSED
CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION



FIFTH FLOOR: LOBBY & ELEVATOR